

comes and claims of me the little I have got, I will give it up to him. [Laughter.]

Now, I say, take your general principle, that no property, general or special, can ever be acquired in a stolen thing. Take the history of your slave trade. Mr. Pinckney, a few sentences later, says that the negro comes here as free as the air you breathe, and you have *no right to rob him of his freedom*; nor have you any right to *purchase his freedom* of any party who has *robbed him of it*. Of course my friend will say: Why, there is the act of 1715, and some later acts, even worse than that.

Now, I ask, what really constitutes law? What is law? Is it a simple edict? Is it a mere statute? Does that constitute law? Is that the definition of law which your text books and commentators taught you? No, sir. Law is a rule founded in reason, justice and right. And any statute, any edict, that professes to be law, and is not founded in reason, and justice, and right, is *not law*.

Gentlemen may say that their title to this property was secured by the act of 1715. Who passed that act? The very parties who had bought the title of the slave-trader. The slave-stealer came into this hall, and tried to heal his title by the act of 1715. Did it heal it? Because, mark you, the answer to that question depends upon the fact: whether that statute is *law*, in the true sense of the word.

When that brutal monarch, of whom I have spoken—the great prototype of your heads of governments that have slavery for their corner-stone—when he issued his brutal edict, consigning the male babe of the Hebrew slave to death, was that law? It was the order of an absolute sovereign, and was executed by his ministers and minions. But was it law? When Herod the Tetrarch—I love to quote these biblical instances to these scriptural gentlemen; it does me so much good—when Herod the Tetrarch, hearing that a king of the Jews was about to be born, published his brutal edict, commanding the slaughter of the male children of that time; and when the voice of lamentation and weeping was heard, Rachel mourning for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they were not—was that law? It was an edict, a statute, promulgated by one who had the power to promulgate it. But it had none of the elements of law.

And when in later days, by orders of council, and bulls, and edicts, men were sent to the stake because of their religious faith—was that law? And when that weak and wicked man, Louis IX. of France, issued his orders which resulted in the bloody scenes of St. Bartholomew—was that law? And no more was the act of 1715 founded in truth, and justice, and right, than were these, its predecessors, which I have quoted; not a whit.

It is getting late, and I am keeping you

here. [Cries of "Go on," "go on."] I must long ago have ceased to interest you. But I want to say just a few words by way of general reply. What is slavery? I have already given its definition as precisely as I could. Is slavery, as a system, right? I deny that it has any foundation in religion, in morals, or in law. And I tell you plainly, that if those gentlemen who are such deeply-read biblical scholars, force me to choose between a Bible that has planted by its authority anything that has so little of justice, of right, of religion, of law, in or about it, as human bondage and slavery, and some other book, so help me God I will turn from it to that Koran which makes perpetual bondage under it impossible. I hold the two books up; one the Bible with the interpretation these gentlemen give it; the other the Koran. I would not advise my young friends, especially the bachelors, to read the Koran. As I have some gray hairs in my beard, perhaps I may read it with safety. In some places the Koran tells about the beautiful black-eyed girls in green, who welcome the faithful to Paradise. Perhaps young bachelors had better not read that portion. But the part that relates to the question under consideration here, I advise them: not only to read, but carefully to study. They will get some lessons of humanity from it in this respect, that they will not get from the Bible as these gentlemen interpret it.

Now, let me state what it seems to me the whole turn of this discussion here has been meant to effectuate; and that is, just simply to resuscitate the old, ruined, rotten, broken-down, disrupted loco-foco party [laughter] under a new name, but still it is the same old thing. Well, my friends, my democratic friends, are really in a strait—I was about to say betwixt two. [Laughter.] But I do not know how many they are in a strait betwixt; half a dozen, I should think. Here is the radical democracy, headed by Mr. Fremont. [Great laughter.] And here is the war democracy, headed by the gentleman whom the people of New Orleans so euphoniously designated "the Beast;" and here is the peace democracy, headed by —, well, the Lord knows who. [Laughter, and cries of "Vallandigham," "Seymour," "Fernando Wood."] I have been a great deal puzzled about the definition of the term "peace democracy." I sometimes think it means a piece of democracy [Renewed laughter.] I rather guess that is about the true meaning of it.

Now, I want to say to these gentlemen one thing in this respect. They may as well quit it and go home, because *the thing is dead*. They may galvanize the corpse, and make it grin hideously; but to bring it to life is an utter impossibility. They remind me of an anecdote I once heard, connected with a poor old gentleman who was my neighbor; a very